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Serious Flooding Along the Ganges



Flooding in Malda, West Bengal

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INDIA: Prolonged and serious flooding along the Ganges, reportedly the worst in 100 years, will have a serious impact on India's agriculture and industry and on the welfare of East Pakistani refugees.

Planting of the rice crop has been delayed in major areas that account for over half of the nation's rice output, and some other crops in these areas are a total loss. Some wheat in storage is spoiling. Communications and transportation that support important industrial centers are disrupted and will further delay production that already was lagging. Some Indian officials place the property damage at \$500 million, but no reliable estimate is yet possible.

Exceptionally heavy monsoon rains for the past two months have flooded extensive areas of seven states across 1,000 miles of northern and north-eastern India. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal are the most seriously affected, with large parts of cities and countryside there flooded, leaving millions homeless and hundreds dead. A recent flood crest that inundated one third of Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh, has moved downstream through Benares and Patna, capital of Bihar.

Water is again rising in West Bengal, where the monsoon has not yet run its course, and millions of East Pakistani refugees there will be affected. Relief officials said flooded roads and wrecked bridges had halted most deliveries of food and other supplies to refugee camps north of Calcutta during early September.

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NOTES

USSR: A group of seven ships--three missile-equipped surface ships, two F-class diesel-powered attack submarines, and two support ships--is presently anchored about 25 miles south of Oahu, Hawaii. An E-II nuclear-powered cruise missile submarine evidently also is in the area. The task force left the Soviet Far East about 25 August and conducted antisubmarine exercises in the Gulf of Alaska before arriving in the Hawaiian area. In the only previous deployment of Soviet surface combatants to this area, two guided missile destroyers operated near the western reaches of the Hawaiian Island chain for a month in 1966.



MALAGASY REPUBLIC: President Tsiranana's political pre-eminence was reaffirmed at last week's congress of the ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD). In a carefully manipulated vote, Tsiranana was designated, without opposition, as the party's presidential candidate for national elections scheduled for early 1972. He also obtained almost total control over the party's executive body and apparently became the party's president for life. Moreover, the president downgraded the once key post of PSD secretary general, last held by discredited former vice president Resampa, who before his downfall, was Tsiranana's heir apparent and potential rival. Tsiranana's renomination is tantamount to his re-election as national president because the PSD faces little or no opposition in the coming elections.



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